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**"SPORTING" BLACK DUCKS  
SUCCESSFULLY PROPAGATED**

Home-grown mallard ducks have usually been too tame to provide good shooting, but a sportsmen's club on Long Island, N.Y., has succeeded in propagating wild black ducks that are good "sporting" birds, reports the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The club's success with this species, says the Bureau, may point the way for large-scale restoration efforts if carried on within the natural breeding ranges.

By using domestic mallard ducks as "callers", the club about 20 years ago first attracted drakes of the wild black duck, which is closely related to the mallard. The domestic ducks, after mating with the wild drakes, brought their hybrid ducklings to the club's feeding grounds. There the attendants captured and pinioned some of the young before the flight feathers had grown. Each succeeding year new pinioned hybrids have mated with wild drakes, and thus each year the young have become more nearly pure black ducks.

Most of the birds now produced on the club's grounds are so close to the typical species that naturalists would classify them as black ducks, according to a Biological Survey ornithologist who recently observed the ducklings. Though this breeding out has taken a number of years, the Biological Survey states that the process can be accelerated by systematically eliminating the birds with mallard characters.

By providing several hundred nest shelters the Long Island club has also succeeded in colonizing the birds and in thus increasing the usefulness of the available breeding grounds. The nesting area, which is along the margin of a marsh, is fenced on the landward side to prevent interference by predators, and during the period of incubation every effort is made to prevent disturbance.

If similar operations are conducted elsewhere, the Biological Survey emphasizes, experimental work should be conducted only within the natural breeding ranges, for it is only within such regions that the wild drakes can be attracted. The Bureau also advises that no hybrids of the first generation should be liberated. This would help prevent uncontrolled hybridization.

All propagators experimenting with migratory waterfowl are required by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to obtain a permit from the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.